

(No. 32.)



1872.

SESSION II.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

PRIVATE SCHOOLMASTERS :

**PETITION RELATING TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND
EXHIBITIONS.**

Presented by Mr. Belbin, 18 December, 1872, and ordered by the House to be printed.



To the Honorable the House of Assembly in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Masters of Private Schools.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT your Petitioners feel themselves aggrieved by the operation of the Primary School System, and also that of the Exhibitions awarded by the Council and Board of Education. Independently of the enormous expenditure involved, of which your Petitioners in common with the other tax-payers of the Colony have a right to complain, they submit that, inasmuch as only a small proportion of the children intended by the Legislature to be reached derive any benefit from the Primary Schools, the system is inefficient as well as costly.

That your Petitioners concur with those of their fellow colonists who are of opinion that the Education of the Colony should be subsidised by the Government in respect to those children only whose parents are unable to pay for their tuition,—more especially in the towns and other centres of population; and that the teaching should be left to private enterprise,—deeming it not more fair for the State to pay for educating children in Schools than to defray the expense of their apprenticeship to trades and callings.

Your Petitioners take the liberty of pointing out to your Honorable House that the teaching of the higher branches of education in Schools subsidised by Salaries, Assistant Teachers, School Buildings, Residences, and other advantages, is an unfair competition with private Educational Establishments.

They also submit that the Exhibitions from Public and Superior Schools involve similar unfair competition, besides working an injustice towards the children of ordinary capacities who are unable to compete for the Exhibitions, and who are necessarily deprived of the attention of the best Teachers in the Schools, which is devoted to those preparing for the Exhibitions.

In reply to the allegation frequently put forth, that the indirect stimulus to those who do not compete for the Exhibitions is of the utmost advantage, your Petitioners submit that great misapprehension exists on that point; and, if an investigation were made, it would be found that a very small per-centage of the children are influenced by such competition.

That your Petitioners also complain of the Regulations of the Board of Education regarding so-called Superior Schools, as constituting a monopoly which works prejudicially to vetoed Institutions in various ways, especially in depriving them of pupils whose future success would add prestige to the Establishment.

That your Petitioners also complain that the late change in the Regulations of the Council, though apparently relieving Private Schools from the disadvantages under which they formerly laboured, really leave matters as they were,—by retaining the right to negative the choice of School made by the parents; and that, consequently, your Petitioners suffer the same grievances as under the Board's Regulations, augmented by the further pecuniary loss entailed by the withdrawal of the successful candidates from their Schools.

Your Petitioners submit that, if the Exhibitions be continued, the choice of Schools at which Exhibitions are to be held should be left to the parents of the Exhibitioners, subject only to such restrictions as would ensure efficient training.

But your Petitioners venture to suggest that the Exhibitions should be abolished, and that a system be substituted of rewarding by the results of all-round Examinations in the various Educational Institutions claiming to participate. Some such system would confer general benefits, and operate as a powerful stimulus to the education, not of the few, but of the many; and also would be free from the imputation of partiality and favoritism. And your Petitioners further submit that, in order to ensure fair play, responsibility, and freedom from denominational preference, the controlling power in matters of Education should be vested in an elective authority, and not an irresponsible body of nominees.

That your Petitioners are of opinion that the constitution of the Primary Schools should be so amended as to exclude children of parents who can afford to pay for their education,—leaving only Free or Ragged Schools to be subsidised by the State, in the Towns; but in thinly populated Country Districts, where the maintenance of Private Schools is impracticable, the principle of limited subsidy might be still carried out, in the interests of the educational requirements of the Districts, with the proviso that the areas of operation be so extended that the subsidised Teachers might be able to work circuits embracing as many localities as possible.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honorable House to take the premises into consideration, and be pleased so to amend the existing Law as to provide a remedy for the grievances of which your Petitioners complain, to relieve the Colony of an enormous and inefficient expenditure, and to afford such other relief as to your Honorable House may seem fit.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

H. M. PIKE, *City School.*

A. IRELAND,

ED. COWPER TENNENT, } *Collegiate School.*

EDWIN D. OLDFIELD, *Commercial Academy.*

E. PITFIELD, A.A., *St. John's Grammar School.*

FREDK. NORMAN, *Derwent School.*